

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1-18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform the steps of:

- a) defining a plurality of business units comprising ~~the~~ a supply chain,
- b) providing financing by ~~the~~ a clearinghouse for at least one of said plurality of business units wherein ~~the~~ said supply chain is a factor in determining ~~the~~ a degree of financing for ~~the~~ said business unit, and
- c) coordinating supply chain transactions by ~~the~~ said financial clearinghouse between ~~the~~ said plurality of ~~the~~ business units.

20. (currently amended) The computer-usable medium of Claim 19 wherein ~~the~~ said supply chain transactions comprises at least one of the following:

payments for value-added services, payments for materials, payments for logistic services, credits for value-added services, credits for materials, credits for logistic services, transfer of raw materials, transfer of parts and components, transfer of finished products, transportation of materials, storage of materials, and the exchange of information.

21. (previously presented) A computer implemented method for providing a financial clearinghouse for a supply chain, said method comprising:

ordering a component, wherein a first node of a supply chain orders a manufacturing component from a second node of said supply chain via a supply chain clearinghouse;
generating a bill for said manufacturing component by said second node; and
coordinating a supply chain transaction by said supply chain clearinghouse between said first node and said second node.

22. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:
reconciling respective accounts of said first node and said second node; and
transferring funds between said respective accounts in response to said reconciling.

23. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 22 further comprising:
reconciling an account of said supply chain clearinghouse; and
transferring funds between said respective accounts and said account of said supply chain clearinghouse in response to said reconciling.

24. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said manufacturing component is selected from the group consisting essentially of raw materials, parts, components, and finished products.

25. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

generating a payment for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of payment for a material, payment for a value-added service, and payment for logistic services.

26. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

extending credit by said supply chain clearinghouse for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of extending credit for a material, extending credit for a value-added service, and extending credit for logistic services.

27. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

expediting a commercial transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of a purchase order, an acknowledgement, electronic billing, and proof of delivery.

28. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 21 further comprising:

conveying ownership of said manufacturing component from said supply chain clearinghouse to said first node.

29. (previously presented) A computer implemented method for providing a financial clearinghouse for a supply chain, said method comprising:

ordering a component, wherein a first node of a supply chain orders a manufacturing component from a second node;

generating a bill for said manufacturing component by said second node to a supply chain clearinghouse; and

coordinating a supply chain transaction by said supply chain clearinghouse between said first node and said second node.

30. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:

reconciling respective accounts of said first node and said second node; and

transferring funds between said respective accounts in response to said reconciling.

31. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said supply chain clearinghouse coordinates the transfer of financial assets between accounts maintained by said supply chain clearinghouse and wherein said coordinating further comprises:

transferring funds from an account of said supply chain clearinghouse to a respective account of said second node when said manufacturing component is sent to said first node; and

transferring funds from a respective account of said first node to said account of said supply chain clearinghouse when said manufacturing component is received by said first node.

32. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 31 further comprising:

transferring funds from said account of said supply chain clearinghouse to a restricted account of said second node to pay for materials used by said second node; and

transferring funds from said account of said supply chain clearinghouse to said restricted account of said second node to pay for logistics costs incurred by said second node

33. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said manufacturing component is selected from the group consisting essentially of raw materials, parts, components, and finished products.

34. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

generating a payment for a transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of payment for a material, payment for a value-added service, and payment for logistic services.

35. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 wherein said coordinating further comprises:

expediting a commercial transaction selected from the group consisting essentially of a purchase order, an acknowledgement, electronic billing, and proof of delivery.

36. (previously presented) The computer implemented method as recited in Claim 29 further comprising:

conveying ownership of said manufacturing component from said supply chain clearinghouse to said first node.